

REMARKS

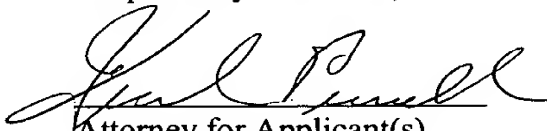
Applicants have filed this Request for Continuing Examination so the claims, as currently presented, would be appropriately considered. In response to the Examiner's statement that the argument is not fully supported by the claims, Applicants have amended the independent claims to clearly state that the personal image is integrally incorporated as a part of the official stamp. Thus, Applicants' arguments clearly support the differentiation over the prior art.

The Examiner still relies on the Brackney reference for illustrating that images can be sent to the USPS incorporated as a part of the official stamp. However, this is not the same thing as placing an order for a customized stamp as claimed by Applicants. In the present invention, people are actually placing orders to obtain such stamps. The Brackney reference is merely directed to a contest where one out of many submissions may be used. In any event, the person submitting the image is not placing an order for a custom image product but is simply submitting an image with the hopes that it may be incorporated by the Official Postal Authority as a stamp. There is no ordering of custom official postal stamps as taught and claimed by Applicants.

As previously mentioned, the U.S. Postal Service has not previously allowed the custom ordering of stamps with personalized images. Thus, it is clearly taught that it teaches away from providing such customized image products. While the Stephens reference does teach use of a personal image in association with postal stamps, it does not teach or suggest the integrally incorporating of the image as a part of the official postal stamp.

In view of the foregoing it is respectfully submitted that the claims in their present form are in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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